1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans

122 Financial support for the field work came from two sources. The Board of Research of the University of California contributed materially to field expenses and to the preparation of the manuscript. In addition, a substantial amount was made available for field expenses by the Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas in México. Funds for a preliminary survey of the Tarascan area, which resulted in the selection of Cherán for study, were supplied by the Board of Research of the University of California and the Instituto Politécnico Nacional.

121 The village of Cherán was chosen for several reasons. In the first place, it is the largest of
177 the mountain Tarascan villages and consequently offered an advantageous opportunity for several people to work simultaneously. Until about 1937 Cherán was also one of the most isolated of the mountain Tarascan towns. In that year the grade for the branch highway [491] from the Guadalajara–Mexico City highway to Uruapan was established. Paving of this highway was completed in 1940, but little effect on Cherán had yet taken place. This situation offered an attractive opportunity for later investigation of the results of lessened isolation. Finally, Cherán is an almost wholly Indian town, a situation which is not true of most of the large mountain Tarascan settlements. Actually, in 1940 only a few families in Cherán did not regard themselves as Tarascan. The
177 non-Tarascan families were more or less tran-
563 sient and occupied a low position in the social
121 scale; most of them were the flotsam left from the highway construction crews and had neither influence nor status in the town. The majority actually left the town during 1940.

[p.1c]

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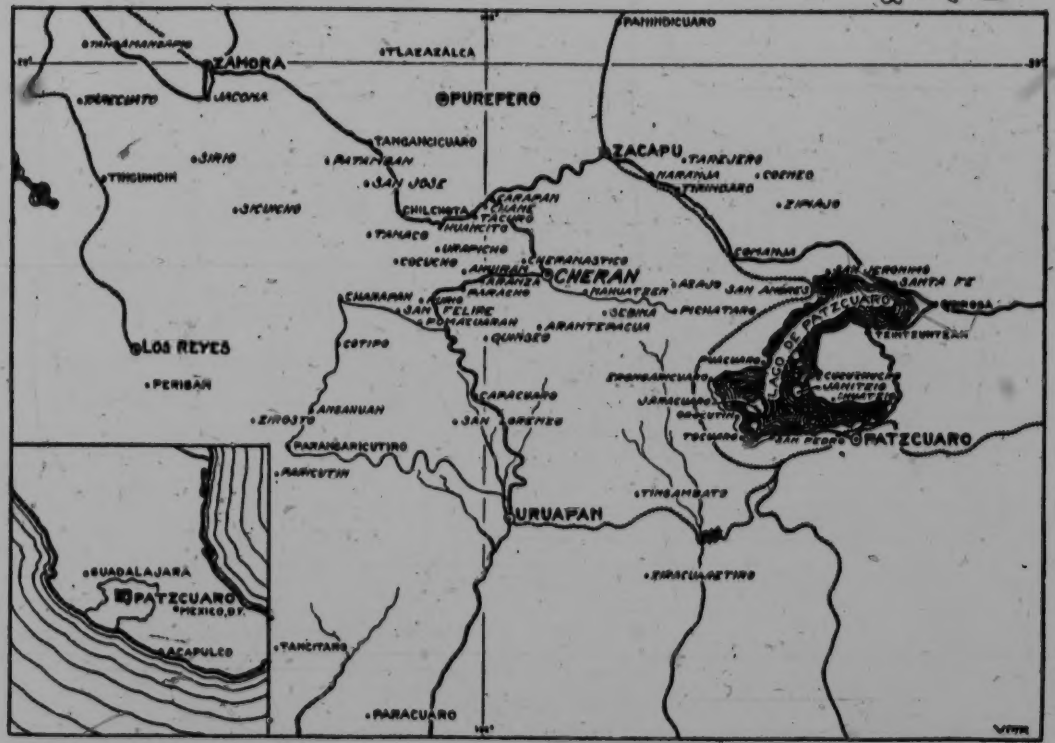

MAP 1.—Tarascan territory. Towns in italic are Tarascan in culture and speech. Towns in roman are either of Mestizo origin or are primarily Mestizo in population and culture and Spanish in speech. The list of Tarascan towns shown is complete only in the vicinity of Cherán; the inadequacies of existing maps make it impossible to show all the Tarascan towns with any approach to accuracy.

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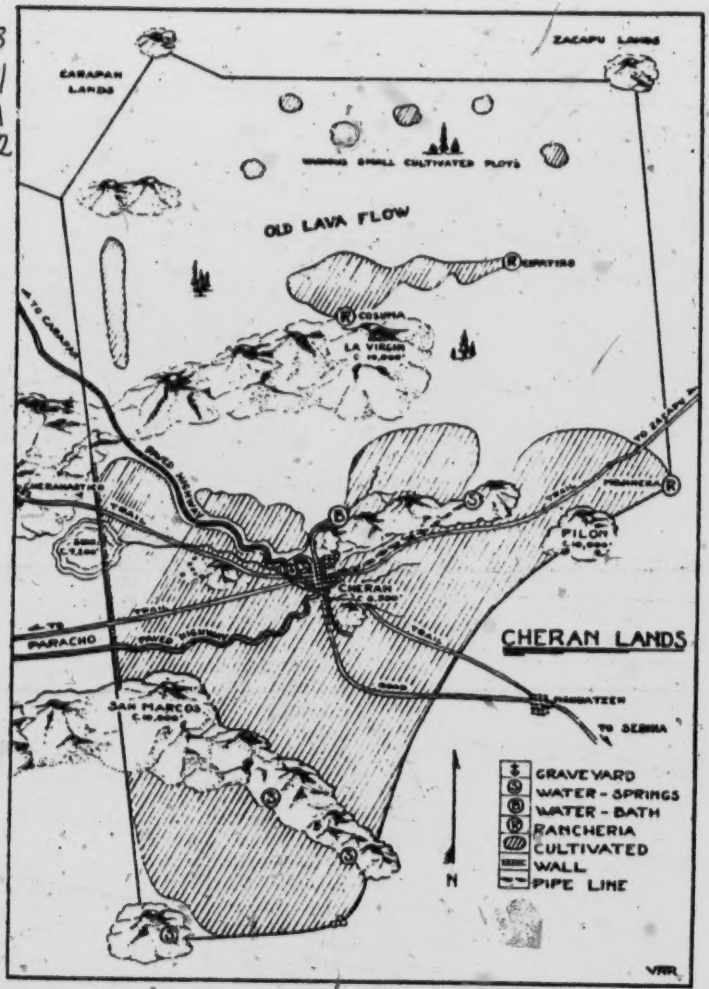

MAP 2.—Cherán lands, showing topography, principal cultivated areas, and various cultural features.

[p. 8]

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clear honey is desired, it may be strained through silk. The native wild combs contain no wax. The larvae are sometimes eaten, either toasted in their cells or fried. The latter method of preparation involves picking the larvae out of the cells. Yet another method is to toast the larvae with onion, chile, and salt. The latter method is said to be especially tasty, but probably only *panaleros* ever use any of these methods very often.[5]

The larvae of another insect, the *traspanal* (*jicotera* in La Cañada), are also collected and eaten occasionally. This insect resembles the native bee but is a little larger and makes its nest in the ground to depths of 1 meter (3 ft.) or more. No other animal food is collected and the use of the eggs of wild birds was denied with every evidence of distaste.

USE OF MINERALS

Stone, volcanic cinders, and clay are the three mineral resources utilized in Cherán. Tuffs and lavas are employed for house building, foundations, and fences. The materials occur either in the town itself or in barrancas within a few hundred yards of the town. Volcanic cinders are also quarried out of the sides of barrancas, often within the town, and are employed to spread over slippery places on trails, streets, and yards. The supply of materials far exceeds demand, and the public domain affords all needed supplies.

Most of the rock used in Cherán comes from a quarry on the west face of the hill of Santa Karákua (also called Santiákujákua) within the village. Most of the rock is prised out of the upper face of the quarry in large pieces, which usually are broken up in the fall to the foot of the quarry. The broken rock is then placed in piles, which later comers will not molest. Smaller rocks and spalls are abundant and anyone may help himself to these. The rocks are usually packed by tying them on burros with ropes, while small pieces may be placed in nets or in pack boxes.

Clay is somewhat more scarce. It is used only for tilemaking and brickmaking, as no one in Cherán makes pottery. A sufficient supply of clay for all present needs is dug out

[5] At Sopoco in La Cañada, Rendón was told that the larvae are sometimes eaten raw.

243 The best wheatland produces about 2 *cargas*
433 of wheat per hectare; lands producing less than 1½ cargas are seldom cultivated. The wheat must then be threshed before sale, and this will cost $2.50 a *carga* in the mill and about the same if threshed by hand. The wheat will sell at from $22 to $30 a *carga*, depending upon the market ($26 in 1941).

243 The return in cash, then, is between $33
434 (1½ *cargas* at $22) and $60 (2 *cargas* at $30). The net profit in terms of our calculations would vary between minus $10.67 and plus $15.08. This figure does not count the labor of carrying the wheat to the house and thence to the mill, or winnowing; neither does it include the value of the straw (used as feed). Again, however, the Cherán farmer who received $33 for his year's work on a *hectare* would count himself relatively fortunate.

The return from wheat is less than the potential return from maize cultivation on average land. In general, however, wheat is usually grown on lands giving a poor maize yield. Moreover, the demand for wheat appears to be
243 more stable, and in days when transport was
434 all on pack animals the greater value of wheat
438 per volume and weight made it much more
[491] attractive as an export crop. The opening of the highway may alter the situation, as it makes bulk transportation of maize feasible. On the other hand, the highway has opened up new markets for wheat. Trucks from the large
[439] flour mill at Morelia now come to buy wheat in Cherán and even penetrate to mountain villages such as Pichataro. Consequently, a much wider market is available than the regional mills that could be reached in a day or a little more with burros. Of course, similar expansion of markets is available to maize growers and producers of other products. It is still too early to predict the effects of improved communications on the agriculture of Cherán, but some additional considerations are discussed in connection with trade.

243 Another way of disposing of wheat is to sell
256 it at a flour mill in a Mestizo town or convert
434 the wheat into flour and sell the flour. The
438 price paid at flour mills is about $4 a *carga* above the Cherán price. Mills charge an 18 percent discount if the farmer chooses to have his wheat milled. This covers waste, bad

town (not the pipe line to the edge of town but the system of hollowed logs which conducts water to the center of town) for which it is responsible. Upon notification that repairs are needed or that logs must be replaced, the *barrio* chief notifies men in his *barrio* of the work needed and the time. This notification may come from the *síndico* (or his *veedor*), or any person noticing something wrong may report it to the *municipio*. The *barrio* not only provides labor but must raise funds if equipment or materials are needed. *Barrio* I is responsible for the section from the cement water tanks to the street called Arista. *Barrio* II is responsible for the section from Arista to Pensador, *barrio* III for the section from Pensador to Olvide, and *barrio* IV for the section from Olvide to the pipe line.

The work is done under the direction of the *síndico*. Usually 24 *comisionados* are named for each log trough needed. Eight men are responsible for cutting the log and hollowing it out; 8 more bring the log down from the mountains, and 8 others put it in place.

In addition, each *barrio* has responsibility for certain other public works. For example, *barrio* III is responsible for maintaining two bridges on the road to Zacapu.

Still another *barrio* duty is cleaning the graveyard of weeds and brush in preparation for the Day of the Dead. The cemetery is divided into four squares corresponding to the four *barrios*, and the young men from each *barrio* are assigned to a section. In 1940, in *barrio* III, having the most numerous population, each youth had a strip 4 paces wide by 65 paces long to clear, while youths of other *barrios* had strips from 6 to 8 paces wide. *Barrio* IV, although having a population as large as *barrio* II and larger than *barrio* I, took a half day longer to do its part and the young men were teased about it.

The maintenance of the pipe line is a sore point, evidently. The original pipe line was installed by the State or Federal Government. Some maintenance is done by the *municipio*, but the line was in bad condition in 1940 and needed replacing. Even more interest, however, was shown in replacing the present wooden aqueduct with a pipe line and perhaps extending it to some other parts of town. It was

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632 621 312 653 estimated that the project of merely replacing the wooden aqueduct would cost between $2,500 and $3,000, and efforts were being made to get the Federal Government to provide the money. Actually the job could have been done by an assessment little larger than that called for by the two main fiestas of the town, but such an idea had not occurred to anyone. This feeling that major improvements should be made by outside agencies is a common one in Mexico.

377 632 653 621 This attitude was somewhat reinforced by the action of the Federal Government in extending a power line to the town and supplying it with street lighting. In this case, it is true, the town was required to provide the posts for the power system. *Comisionados* were named who cut the posts and charred the ends under the direction of the *síndico*. However, this involved expenditure of labor rather than of money.

491 632 621 A number of road repair jobs are undertaken from time to time. In 1940, in preparation for the harvest, the community repaired part of the road toward Nahuatzen. A new entry into town was made which avoided the necessity of crossing a bridge over the southern *barranca*. The existing bridge was in bad repair, and replacement was thus postponed.

ELECTIONS

632 666 667 Elections in Cherán ostensibly follow regular legal forms. Extensive and nearly complete lists of voters are prepared by the municipal officials. Some 2 or 3 weeks before the election the mayor calls a town meeting to nominate candidates. The mayor asserted that everyone was invited in 1940 but that very few attended. Most of those, he insisted, had been rounded up by the police. Others felt that only the most influential people in town were invited. In either case, apparently only about 50 persons attended. As at the 1940 election *barrios* II and IV were to elect members of the *ayuntamiento*, two tickets were nominated. These tickets were forwarded to the State offices of the PRM (*Partido Revolucionario Mexicano*) in Morelia, and the second of the two tickets was approved as the official PRM ticket. This must have been an act of prestidigitation on the part of the State officials, for there was nothing to choose between the two tickets and the State

[P. 25c] La Cañada

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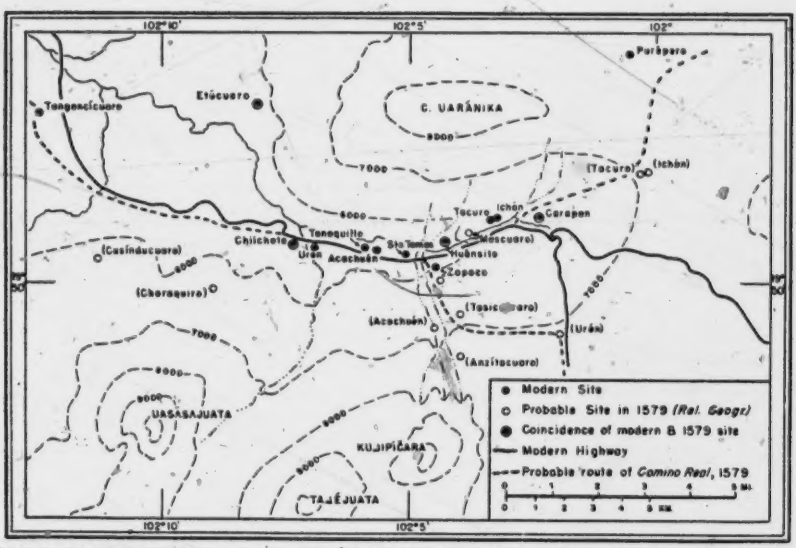

MAP 14.—Distribution of La Cañada settlements, 1580 and 1946. The 1580 data are from Mus. Nac., leg. 102, Relación de Chilchota, 1579. The towns of Tacuro and Ichán still retain their old lands east of Charapan.

11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
NU34 Tarasco NU34

539 823 At daybreak the astonished king and warriors beheld, instead of a flourishing valley, a lake whose waters formed the shape of a heart.

These things occurred many years ago, but each morning Father Huriata continues to kiss with his first rays of light the crystal-clear waters created by Princess Hapunda, the beautiful "Tzinzi-quin."

QUIRITZÍCUARO (THE GREAT FOUNTAIN)

Historical Comment

312 [539] [361] The legend of Quiritzícuaro refers to one of the most significant factors in the life of the Tarascans—a needed spring to furnish a constant supply of fresh water. Almost every town in Michoacán is located beside a lake or is near a spring. While the territory to the north and to the south of La Sierra abounds in springs, their scarcity in La Sierra itself has always been a problem. In pre-Conquest times, many towns supplemented the flow from the local spring by constructing aqueducts of hollowed half-logs to bring in water from springs some distance away. This method is still used in many of the pueblos of La Sierra.

312 584 [178] The discovery of a new spring has been charmingly linked with a tradition existing for centuries in the highland pueblos of La Sierra, where the young people carry on their limited courtship while walking to and from the water fountain. The maiden loiters and gazes across the fields, never facing her suitor directly, and listens as he talks to her. His presence on the road to the fountain, although understood by the townspeople and usually prearranged with the girl, must give the appearance of being quite accidental.

361 49 [539] The pueblo of Paracho, referred to in the legend, is one of three significant Tarascan villages on the road that leaves the main highway at Carapan and winds southward for forty-five miles through pine and oak woods and small cultivated valleys to Uruapan (Fig. 1). Paracho is still primitively picturesque. The town's